

REPORT 70
OF THE
PRESIDENT & MANAGERS
OF THE
UNION CANAL COMPANY
OF
PENNSYLVANIA,
TO THE
STOCKHOLDERS.

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,
November 18, 1823.

PHILADELPHIA:

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Annual Report.

In compliance with the act of incorporation, the President and Managers of the Union Canal Company of Pennsylvania, place before the Stockholders the following report of their proceedings during the past year:—

ABOUT the time of the last annual meeting of the Stockholders, some differences of opinion existed between the Board of Managers and the Engineer then employed, which made it necessary to dissolve the connexion with him, and to take immediate measures for filling that station, by the appointment of another person. After some inquiry, the Board had the satisfaction to learn, that Mr. Canvass White, of New York, was disengaged, and that his services could probably be had. That gentleman was already known to several of its members, and was forcibly recommended to its attention by the satisfactory manner in which he had conducted and completed the eastern section of the great Erie Canal. The Board lost no time in applying to him, and having made a contract with him on the 19th of April last, they have been enabled to avail themselves ever since of his diligence and experience.

Before the late Engineer left the Company's service he had located a line of about nine and a half miles of Canal, from the summit level to Brown's Mill, and the President was authorised to enter into contract for the excavation of the whole or any part thereof; but owing to the unfavorableness of the season, nothing was undertaken until after Mr. White commenced his operations in the month of April.

At the request of the Board, that gentleman had engaged and brought with him three assistants from the New York works, Messrs. Olmstead, Guilford and Welsh, who, under his direction, have contributed much to the systematic advancement of the work; and it is but justice to these young men to state, that their uniform correctness and prudence, have been the means, in a great measure, of preventing disputes between those employed by the company and the neighbouring landholders.

In the month of May, Mr. Le Barron, who was under contract to excavate the summit level, gave notice of his inability to fulfil his engagement and abandoned the work; whereupon a committee was sent to Lebanon to act in concert with the President, and adopt such measures as the occasion required. A new contract was immediately entered into with another person, upon favorable terms.

Mr. White proceeded meantime with every possible despatch to revise the former surveys, and to continue the line of the canal along the valley of the Tulpehocken towards the Schuylkill. The lock pits, for the descent from the summit were dug out, and the line finished to its junction with the old canal above Ley's Spring, and during the summer the earth bottom of the summit was every where probed and the puddling completed, together with the banking in front of a very considerable extent of rock, to prevent leakage. By the end of August a line of 26 miles was let to various contractors, and the works were prosecuted with great spirit and diligence. The old western feeder was also repaired, and progress made in the construction of the reservoir connected with it.

Highly gratified and agreeably surprised at the reports of the great extent of work already executed, or in progress, a general wish prevailed amongst the members of the board, to visit the whole line of Canal, and by a personal inspection of these useful labours, to be able to represent their true state to the Stockholders. Accordingly eight members repaired to Reading on the third of this month, where they were joined

by the President and Engineer, who came from the works to accompany them. This committee commenced their view at the lowest section then let out, being about eight miles from the Schuylkill, and passed along the entire line to the west end of the summit level. Their report states that the great progress made in the excavation of the Canal, and the manner in which it is located and executed, have more than equaled their highest expectations. The whole line east, and exclusive of the summit level, extending to section No. 43, and contracted for as before mentioned, comprises a distance of 26 miles. The sections are each half a mile in extent, many of them are entirely dug out, and others are in a state of great forwardness; the whole of this part of the route, on an average, being two thirds excavated, and as eight hundred men are employed, the remainder must be soon completed.—In addition, contracts have been made within a few days, for a further space of five miles reaching to a point but three miles distant from the Schuylkill. Contracts have likewise been entered into for twenty-six of the locks to be completed by October next, and negotiations for the residue are in progress, and a number of hands are employed in raising and preparing the materials for the masonry. And here it may be proper to remark, that William Coleman, Esq. of Cornwall Furnace, with a liberality for which the thanks of this Board have been presented to him, gave permission to the contractors to take from his estate, free of cost, all the sand stone which may be required in the construction of the locks. A quantity of timber is also collected upon different points of the works, and arrangements are now making for all that may be required.

Nine-tenths of the deep cutting upon the summit have been overcome, and it is presumed, from the diligence with which the work is prosecuted in that quarter, that it will be shortly finished.

It is but justice to observe that every part of the work appears to have been planned and executed by the Engineer

not only with a view to its stability, but also with a due regard to economy and the best interests of the Stockholders.

For a further illustration of this report, the Board respectfully refer the Stockholders to Mr. White's working plans on file in this office.

In this very interesting work, it is a matter of importance to have ascertained that the contracts can be made and executed upon terms much lower than had been expected, and that the ground east of the summit, for the most part, affords good digging, free from all formidable obstacles, except towards the mouth of the Tulpehocken. It is likewise ascertained, by actual experience, that the Canal can be rendered perfectly water tight, and that the feeders and other streams in the vicinity of the summit, give such a supply of water as to put at rest every apprehension on that head.

The Board, in presenting the foregoing view of the progress of the work committed to their charge, think themselves warranted in the belief that a complete Canal Navigation will be finished from Reading to Lebanon, during the Summer of 1825, being a distance of thirty-seven miles, including the summit level, and overcoming in its course a fall of 300 feet.—They beg leave to add their further opinion, that the Western section from Lebanon to the Susquehanna, with a fall of only 210 feet, and which is of comparatively easy execution, may be completed in two years thereafter, and thus unite the waters of the Susquehanna and Schuylkill.

In order to avoid litigation, the Board have had circular letters addressed to all the landholders, whose grounds have been occupied in the location of the Canal, offering to settle the damages upon equitable terms; and for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of land covered by the Canal and Spoil Banks, Mr. Olmstead, one of the Assistant Engineers, has been engaged in making a survey of the whole route, designating private boundaries, and giving all necessary information. When this duty shall be accomplished, an accurate plan will be prepared, and a duplicate thereof deposited in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

The board will conclude their report by a few general remarks, principally in relation to the necessity and advantage of speedily completing this important work. It must be viewed, they think, as a connecting link and first great effort in the formation of a water communication between the transmontane and Atlantic rivers; an object, which, for the interest of the commonwealth at large, ought to be soon accomplished. It will at once serve as a pattern for similar undertakings on the route to the Ohio, and the Lakes; and keep the trade of the West in its present course. The practicability and success of such a work will stimulate other associations, to continue the chain within our own limits, and prevent our western brethren from looking to new sources for a water conveyance, which may lead to a new market.—Most sections of the state are deeply interested to secure this vast trade of the west, both by land and water, from being diverted from Pennsylvania, hitherto the great thoroughfare of the Union. It is indeed the concern of the whole commonwealth, and this company may take credit for having zealously and effectually performed their part of the great work. It was ever the hope of the early projectors of the Union Canal—of Franklin, Rittenhouse, Smith, Morris, and other eminent men, that our work would produce another, and another, until the way should be opened entire, to the Lakes and western waters. May their wishes be speedily fulfilled, and your example give birth to new Associations for that laudable and useful purpose.

The result of late examinations shows that no rival work leading from the Susquehanna to a neighbouring State, is likely to be ever undertaken; and the impracticability of an ascending navigation from the tide, by the bed of that river, is now conceded by all. Hence it would seem to be an obvious conclusion that the safety of communication by this Canal, must secure to it the transport of a large proportion of the products of the countries bordering upon the first of our Atlantic rivers, together with an absolute certainty of enjoying all the return trade; these, exclusively of others, are considered as fairly offering the most encouraging sources of profit,

which, in a few years, cannot but be realized by the Stockholders of this Company.

The accounts of the Treasurer, herewith submitted, show the amount of monies received and paid by him, and the balance of \$18,992 60 remaining in his hands on the first instant.

A statement of the Lottery funds is also annexed, exhibiting the amount of \$105,609 31, standing to the credit of those accounts, after providing for all interest hitherto due.

All of which is respectfully submitted by order of the Board of Managers.

SAMUEL MIFFLIN, President.

UNION CANAL OFFICE, }
Nov. 18th, 1823.

The amount of the Lottery Fund received from the Old Company, was, on the 21st May, 1821, \$70,526 94

Which has been increased by interest, and the investment thereof, 9,391 13
79,918 07

There has been received from the operations of the Lottery, since that period, after deducting the interest due the Stockholders up to the 16th October last, \$25,691 24

Making, \$105,609 31

Of this amount, there are invested, at 6 per cent. \$72,707 55

Do. at 5 per cent. 30,000 00

And there remains to be invested, 2,901 76

Total, \$105,609 31

THOMAS P. ROBERTS, Treasurer.

Philadelphia, Nov. 18th, 1823.